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ABSTRACT

In response to alarming drop-out rates among high school students and indications that the emerging workforce will be predominantly minority and disadvantaged, the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System (CCCOES) developed the Partners program to encourage minority students from as early as seventh grade to remain and succeed in school. The program, which is a partnership between the CCCOES, the Denver Public Schools, and the Colorado Minority Engineers Association (CMEA), provides mentoring and counseling to high school students and supports minority students who desire to begin their postsecondary education at a Denver metro-area state community college. Partners is a complement to the CMEA's Mathematical Engineering Science Achievement (MESA) program and the heart of both efforts is an emphasis on individual students, approached through such activities as curriculum and career counseling, academic tutorials tailored to students' individual needs, incentive scholarship awards to be applied to postsecondary education, and summer job opportunities. Requirements for participants in the MESA Partners program include 60% attendance in weekly program meetings; participation in one family orientation program per school year; participation in a minimum of three tutorial sessions each grading period; and a grade point average of 2.0 in the math, science, and English curriculum. Program advisors are required to ensure that: a field trip to a college or university is scheduled in the first semester, all high school juniors are signed up for appropriate tests, and all seniors have completed applications and scholarship requests on time. Advisor checklists are included in the report. (ALB)

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Colorado Community College & Occupational Education System

The Partners Program

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Statement of Need

The significance of an emerging workforce that is predominantly minority and disadvantaged presents a tremendous challenge to the nation's education systems. The Hudson Institute's Workforce 2000 notes that "the shrinking numbers of young people, the rapid pace of industrial change, and the ever-rising skill requirements of the emerging economy make the tasks of fully using minority workers particularly urgent between now and the year 2000. Both cultural changes and education and training investments will be needed to create real equal employment opportunity." In addition, the Ford Foundation's Toward a More Perfect Union: Basic Skills, Poor Families, and Our Economic Future, makes the point that "dramatic demographic changes already at work will decrease the total size of the young adult population, and a higher share of this smaller total will be composed of minority and economically disadvantaged groups. Thus, those at the bottom of the distribution curve of skills and schooling will increasingly hold the key to the future of America's performance."

Colorado is not immune from this challenge. A recent joint report by the Colorado Department of Local Affairs and the Department of Labor and Employment, "Colorado Workforce 2000", notes that "the expanding Colorado workforce will be older, more feminine, and less Anglo;" and that "Colorado's projected job mix will require a relatively more educated worker than his/her national counterpart." Moreover, Colorado's future workforce--school-age youth--appear to have a rough road ahead to obtaining

the education and skills necessary for adequate employment. Colorado Department of Education data indicate that 8,630 (or 6.1 percent) of the state's 10th, 11th, and 12th graders dropped out of school in 1986. Approximately one-third more students dropped out prior to reaching the 10th grade. Well over 20 percent of Colorado students (about 13,000 in 1986) fail to complete high school; for Hispanic youth, the drop-out rate is estimated at 50 percent. **[Check the CDE report Focus on the Future for more recent data.]**

The Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System (CCCOES) has developed a unique program, "Partners," to meet the challenge noted above. A partnership between the Denver Public Schools, the Colorado Minority Engineers Association (CMEA), and CCCOES the program identifies minority students in the Denver schools as early as the 7th grade and provides mentoring and counseling to encourage them to remain and succeed in school. The Partners program is a complement to the CMEA Mathematic Engineering Science Achievement program (MESA) which has placed numerous minority students in the nation's most prestigious colleges and universities over the past 10 years.

The Partners program supports minority students who desire to begin their postsecondary education at a Denver metro-area state community college. The Partners program has been recognized by The Sears-Roebuck Foundation as a recipient of its prestigious Keeping America Working award. The Partners program has already been expanded to one other region of Colorado--Trinidad State Junior College in rural southeast Colorado

sponsors a Partners program. CCCOES proposes to expand this successful pilot program to include the entire statewide network of community colleges.

Learner-Centered Emphasis

The heart of the Partners program is its emphasis on the individual student and the assistance and encouragement tailored to the individual. The student benefits through the following activities:

- Curriculum and career counseling to participating students. Counseling occurs in the form of mentoring by community partners as well as formal counseling by professional counselers.
- Academic tutorials tailored to students' individual needs. The tutorials are delivered at the community colleges and designed to strengthen students' skills.
- Incentive scholarship awards to be applied to postsecondary education. Student earn points for grade point average, participation in student organizations, participation in tutorial sessions or providing tutorial support, and leadership roles in the program. Accumulated points assure tuition and associated costs for one to four semesters at a CCCOES community college.
- Summer enrichment. Students are provided with summer job opportunities. In addition, summer college programs provide remedial and prescriptive support, and

advanced enrichment programs to students in a college environment at a CCCOES community college.

Far-reaching Impact

As noted earlier, the Partners program has been reconized as a Keeping America Working project by the Sears-Roebuck Foundation in conjunction with the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. In addition, it builds off the successful MESA program. Of the 126 MESA high school seniors in 12 Colorado school systems in 1986, 88 percent are still in college and 55 percent are receiving academic scholarships or grants.

CCCOES has adapted the successful evaluation tool used for the MESA program as the primary evaluation tool for the Partners pilot program. This model follows students through the completion of their academic and postacademic endeavors.

Cost-effectiveness

As mentioned above, the heart of the Partners program is its emphasis on the individual student. In the initial pilot project, 58 percent of the funding was allocated for activities that directly benefited the inidividual student. As the Partners program is expanded to the entire statewide network of community colleges this ratio will be maintained. It is the individual attention that the students receive through the Partners program that ensures their success in school.

CMEA

MESA PARTNERS

BACKGROUND

The Problem

Since the early 1970's, many individuals and organizations--including colleges, corporations, educators, professional organizations, minority organization, and philanthropies--have become involved in efforts to increase the number of minorities entering engineering and related science fields. A major source of pressure for an increase in minority professionals has come from the federal government demands for Affirmative Action employment by federal contractors, An additional source of motivation for the individuals and organizations involved lies in a basic concern for equal opportunity and a belief in the value of a college education in opening up a broad spectrum of career opportunities. The result has been a considerable commitment of resources and th creation of several national and local agencies dedicated to increasing the number of minorities in engineering and business professions.

Colorado is particularly important to his national effort for several reasons. Within our state, there are large and concentrated populations of Hispanics, Blacks, and American Indians. There are also many and varied technical and business employers in the state and a number of community colleges and universities. Colorado has a long-standing commitment to quality public education and, for all of these reasons, is an excellent state in which to concentrate efforts at increasing the number of minority professionals.

While efforts toward this goal might be undertaken at any time in the education and employment system, it seems apparent that the potential for maximum impact exists at the secondary school level. In large part, this is a result of the nature of technology itself--a field which requires a strong and cumulative background in mathematics and the physical sciences. Students who do not enroll in and master the basics of secondary level science and mathematics will be both unprepared and unable to enroll in collegiate level technical and business oriented studies. This says that the size of the pool of minorities graduating and seeking employment is actually determined by secondary school decisions made eight or nine years earlier with regard to basic math and science courses.

Most students, and particularly those from minority backgrounds, must make critical curriculum decisions at a point in their lives where they have little realization about the eventual consequences. Since there are relatively few minority engineers, for example, the possibility of ninth and tenth grade minority students being aware of career opportunities in engineering from their families--the traditional source of role models--is small. High school counselors are available to stress career possibilities beyond those already known to students. However, counselors also carry heavy workloads and can hardly be expected to have extensive knowledge of all career fields and academic requirements.

The Solution

Given the importance of early curricula choices and commitments needed for successfully pursuing a career in today's competitive economy, it is critical that efforts to increase the number of minority students be focused in the secondary schools.

In the State of Colorado, the MESA Partners program starts in the sixth grade. MESA Partners students are encouraged to enroll in 8th grade pre-algebra (where the course is available).

MESA Partners Program Advisor Responsibilities - Summary

There are currently six basic components to the MESA Partners program, all designed to increase student commitment to careers in mathematics, science, engineering and related fields.

1. High School Curricula Counseling. Special curriculum counseling is required for MESA Partners students in the selection of their high school program. MESA Partners advisors should review the individual student's curriculum programs to assure that the selected courses will provide them the required four years of college preparatory math, English, and science. Advisors are also responsible to ensure the students attain a high level of academic performance (B grade or above) to enhance the student's chances for admission to college or universities and successfully compete for scholarships.

2. College and Career Counseling. The MESA Partners advisor will provide special counseling for college entrance preparation and guidance in career selection. This is in addition to the counseling normally provided by the schools. The MESA Partners advisor will meet with all MESA Partners students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) at least two times per year for a group discussion with local college counselors, Admissions officers and their assistants. Information covered should include course/grade requirements, entrance testing standards, financial aid application, and submission dates/forms. MESA Partners advisors should also meet with MESA Partners students on a personal, one-on-one basis to understand and provide support and guidance for individual needs and goals.

   The MESA Partners advisor should ensure their students have at least two opportunities per year for a college/university visitation (parent/guardian participation is encouraged...with at least one of the visitations providing formal parent/guardian invitations). The MESA Partners Advisor should schedule at least three meetings per semester and ensure a local professional minority engineer/scientist/manager is available to present his/her field of endeavor and to answer MESA Partners student questions (parent/guardian invitations are encouraged).

3. Academic Tutorials. Many minority students have not had the necessary background and curriculum experiences necessary to cope with advanced mathematics and science courses. The MESA Partners advisor should develop weekly tutoring programs to assists MESA Partners students to

acquire the needed math, science, and English skills. Tutoring sessions can be scheduled at convenient times throughout the school day and/or after school. Tutoring can be provided by: Advanced MESA Partners Students, college and university students, professional engineers/scientists/mangers, and community volunteers.

4. Field Trips. The MESA Partners advisor will provide actual contact with individuals working in engineering, mathematics, and science related fields through field trips to research centers, universities, and engineering firms. This direct contact should give the students a awareness of the kinds of professions they may enter and an opportunity to talk direction with successful role model minority engineers, scientists and managers in their work environments.

5. Incentive Scholarship Awards. Incentive scholarship awards will be credited to 11th and 12 grade students each semester for those who achieve a "C" average or better in college-prep mathematics, physical science, and English courses and fulfill other MESA Partners program requirements. Awards are paid only upon college enrollment and encourage/support the student to attend college.

6. Summer Enrichment and Training Opportunities. Summer offers opportunities for further development of career option awareness as well as financial assistance for MESA Partners students. MESA Partners advisors should contact local business and industry to conduct a "Job Fair" Local youth employment agencies should also participate and MESA Partners advisors should ensure students have completed a resume and been counseled on job interview techniques.

   Where possible, a special summer course should be provided by industry, volunteers, or universities to provide additional enrichment to the program for MESA Partners students.

Why MESA Partners?

1. MESA Partners makes maximum use of existing resources in schools and is relatively inexpensive.

2. Students are pre-selected for aptitudes in math and science. By grouping them in MESA Partners programs, a variety of special awareness and motivational experiences can be efficiently arranged.

3. MESA Partners is not just a science oriented track. It recognizes that good high school preparation is appropriate for all careers and that math and science are good preparation for many non-science careers.

MESA PARTNERS PROGRAM

CONCEPT

The MESA Partners program is designed to prepare, motivate, and provide students the necessary support systems to ensure successful participation in a College/University curriculum and the attainment of a bachelor degree. To accomplish this objective, the program has minimum requirements that incorporate: · Student Involvement · Parental/Guardian Support · Science Project Activities · Industry Involvement · and Field Trips to College/University Campuses and Business/Industry/Government Institutions.

MINIMUM MESA PARTNERS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- Regular scheduled weekly MESA Partners meetings. (excludes school holidays or school closures).
- One family orientation program per-semester.
- A scheduled student tutor/tutee program.
- One college/university campus field trip per-school year.
- One Industry/Business/Government field trip per-school year.
- Three guest speakers per semester from Business/Industry with the focus on available careers and job requirements.
- One "New MESA Partners Member" program recruiting activity per-semester.
- One individual student/advisor counseling session per-semester.
- Student curriculum that will ensure four years of college preparatory Math, Science, and English is achieved upon High School Graduation.
- A 2.0 minimum GPA in the composite Math, Science, English curriculums with a minimum C grade in all other individual courses.
- All high school program seniors and juniors participating in the A.C.T/S.A.T standardized tests (can be one or the other).
- All high school juniors participating in the P.S.A.T (if funds are available).

MESA PARTNERS PROGRAM

TITLE: MESA PARTNERS STUDENT

MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY
REQUIREMENTS

- A MESA Partners student must achieve 60% attendance in "available" weekly MESA Partners Meetings (excludes holidays and official school closures).
- Participate in one family orientation program per-school year.
- Participate in one "New MESA Partners Student" recruitment program per-school year.
- Participation in a minimum of three MESA Partners Tutor/Tutee sessions each grading period.
- Participate in one MESA Partners field trip per school year.
- Participate in one MESA Partners project activity per-school year.
- Insure his/her curriculum schedule will achieve four years of college preparatory Math, Science and English upon high school graduation.
- Maintain a 2.0 GPA in the Math, Science and English curriculum each marking period.
- Insure a C grade or better is achieved in all other courses during the current marking period.
- Successfully complete the equivalent of one semester of the above MESA Partners program requirements.

HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS AND SENIORS
ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- National Testing Program...take either the S.A.T. or A.C.T.
- High School Juniors take the P.S.A.T (IF FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE).

MESA PARTNERS ADVISOR

PROGRAM CHECKLIST

CONCEPT

To achieve a successful MESA Partners Program the MESA Partners Advisor must plan and execute the following minimum activities.

- Contact prior MESA Partners Students' at the beginning of each school year. Acquire a listing of all prior MESA Partners students that are attending the advisor's assigned school.

- Schedule a meeting of the identified MESA Partners students at the earliest date possible.

  - The first meeting should develop plans for MESA Partners student recruiting and schedule student officer elections.

  - The target date recruiting program should incorporate an outside business or industry speaker and a one semester agenda for program activities, projects and visitations / field trips.

- The MESA Partners advisor should schedule meetings with all Science and Math teachers in an effort to identify and recruit potential MESA Partners students.

- The first recruiting meeting should be closed with handouts to MESA Partners students and Associate MESA Partners student recruits inviting parents to attend a parents orientation meeting within two weeks.

- The advisor should review each associate MESA Partners students curriculum and develop an appropriate curriculum to ensure curriculum schedules of all students will achieve four years of college preparatory Math, Science and English upon High School Graduation.

- The advisor will establish a regular weekly meeting time and location for the MESA Partners program for the balance of the school year within the two weeks of the beginning of the fall semester.

- The advisor will schedule at least three Business/Industry / Government speakers per semester. (The advisor can seek assistance in this project from the MESA Partners director). The advisor will ensure the MESA Partners students are informed of the minimum MESA Partners Program requirements and instruct the elected MESA Partners Club Secretary and other officers on the attendance and program evaluation MESA Partners program tracking requirements.

MESA PARTNERS ADVISOR

- The advisor will schedule one project/activity for each semester's programs (may seek assistance on project/activity from the MESA Partners Director).

- The advisor will ensure MESA Partners student attendance tracking and program evaluation reports are submitted to the MESA Partners Director within two weeks of the end of each grading period/semester, as appropriate.

For High School MESA Partners Advisors

In addition to the above, the Advisor will ensure that:

- The advisor will schedule a college/university field trip within the first semester and ensure the filed trips incorporate college entrance requirements and financial aid/scholarship availability information.

- All high school juniors' are scheduled to take the PSAT (providing funds are available) and the A.C.T. or S.A.T.

- All seniors' have completed, accurately and neatly, college/university entrance materials in a timely fashions.

- High School seniors' have submitted requests for scholarships and financial aid on a timely basis.

- All junior and senior MESA Partners students have completed their "Incentive Scholarship Credit Forms" correctly and have signed the documents. Upon audit of these documents the advisor will counter-sign the "Incentive Scholarship Request For Credit" and submit to the CMEA Office within four weeks of the end of each semester.

- The advisor director will also ensure all junior and senior high school students are aware that failure to complete the incentive award forms and submit them on a timely basis will reduce the amount credited to the student's scholarship fund.

- All senior high school MESA Partners students are aware that failure to submit the "Incentive Scholarship Program Check Request" by the student may result in forfeit of all funds held for the student in the "Incentive Scholarship Program." The reports are required to be completed, signed and submitted to the advisor prior to the end of the school year, if the student is expecting funds for the following September. Otherwise, the student must submit the check request within 16 months of his/her graduation date.

MESA Partners advisors are required to attend quarterly MESA Partners advisor meetings scheduled by the MESA Partners director.

THE MESA PARTNERS ADVISOR'S CHECKLIST ON STUDENT SELECTION PROCEDURES

Step 1	Set up a meeting with the Math and Science Department's faculty and discuss with them the purpose of MESA Partners and how it operates. Ask for their support.
Step 2	Ask for recommendations from the Mathematics and Science faculty and request that they survey their classes for eligible students. Principals, counselors, and English teachers may also make recommendations. If a school has a majority of students enrolled from the MESA Partners target group, request that the Mathematics and Science faculty survey their classes using the Mathematics Interest Survey form. For schools with low minority enrollments, Mathematics and Science faculty may prefer to simply send in a list of recommended students. ONLY THE ACADEMIC MATHEMATICS CLASSES ABOVE THE ALGEBRA I LEVEL SHOULD BE SURVEYED FOR ELIGIBLE STUDENTS. (APPLICABLE TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ONLY.)
Step 3	Review the students' survey forms to determine which students are eligible for MESA Partners. Also, check past test scores.
Step 4	Review with the MESA Partners Director and pre-selected student survey forms in order to make the final determination of students who are eligible for the Program.
Step 5	Invite the eligible students, as determined by their survey forms and the MESA Partners Director, to a meeting with you and the Director. At this time, talk to them about the MESA Partners Program and invite them to become MESA Partners students.
Step 6	Invite the parents of these students to the Parent Orientation Meeting. Take necessary steps to insure that all parents attend this meeting. Have parents complete the Parent Permission Form at this time.
Step 7	Give the MESA Partners Parent Permission Form to students whose parents did not attend the Parent Orientation.
Step 8	Have students complete the MESA Partners Application Information Form.

WHEN A STUDENT HAS COMPLETED THE MESA PARTNERS APPLICATION INFORMATION FORM AND HAS RETURNED A COMPLETED PARENT PERMISSION SLIP, THAT STUDENT IS ENROLLED AS A MESA PARTNERS STUDENT.

MESA Partners Program Objectives

ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES SUMMARY

OBJECTIVES	RESPONSIBILITY
1	Conduct initial meeting with the previous year's MESA Partners members.
2	Recruit new MESA Partners members.
3	Establish record keeping procedures and MESA Partners program requirements.
4	Have one MESA Partners parent orientation or activity per semester ...organize "Concerned Parents, Inc."
5	Ensure that all MESA Partners members are scheduled to take college prep Math, Science and English classes for the coming school year.
6	Plan Meeting activities: - One field trip to industry - One field trip to a university - One project/competition per semester - Monthly guest speakers (minimum 3/semester)
7	Attend director's quarterly meetings

Additional Objectives for High School Advisors:

8	Ensure that high school juniors are scheduled to take the PACT or PSAT test in October and the SAT or ACT test sometime during their junior year in high school.
9	Assist high school seniors in completing college entrance forms, scholarship and financial aid applications.
10	Ensure that all high school juniors and seniors understand and have correctly completed the "Incentive Award Scholarship Program" forms and "Agreement".

CHECKLIST

ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITY

OBJECTIVE 1

Conduct initial meeting with the previous year's MESA Partners members.

Date of First Meeting _____
(in September)

Agenda Requirements:

1) Go over minimum MESA Partners membership requirements with students.

2) Discuss recruitment of new members.

3) Plan election of officers.

4) Schedule regular meeting time, date and location.

Additional Suggestions:

1) Share summer activities.

2) Remember to invite MESA Partners members coming in from the middle/ junior high schools.

CHECKLIST

ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITY

OBJECTIVE 2

Recruit new MESA Partners members.

Date of Recruitment Meeting _____
(end of September - October)

Recruitment Strategies:

- Ask MESA Partners members to invite interested friends
- Ask science/math teachers for recommendations
- Send printed invitations to identified students in college prep math and science classes
- Place item concerning recruitment meeting in school announcements
- Put posters up in hallways announcing the recruitment meeting

Agenda Suggestions:

- Student officers discuss activities and field trips, explain the "Incentive Scholarship Program"
- MESA Partners director explains overall program goals and objectives
- Industry/university guest speaker to discuss opportunities and how to prepare
- Go over minimum MESA Partners membership requirements
- Pass-out MESA Partners facts summary sheet and membership sign-up forms

CHECKLIST

ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITY

OBJECTIVE 3

Establish record keeping procedures.

Month: September

Suggestions:

- Review required forms and program requirements with MESA Partners director
- Instruct MESA Partners officers (not just the secretary) on how to fill out the forms ... and program requirements

  Forms:
  - Quarterly report/attendance form
  - Incentive award forms/agreement/check request
  - Student information forms

- Keep forms in MESA Partners handbook
- Mark paperwork due dates on MESA Partners calendar
- Turn in required forms within 2 weeks of the end of the grading period

CHECKLIST

ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITY

OBJECTIVE 4

Have a MESA Partners parent orientation or activity per semester.

1st Semester: Parent Orientation Date _____

Agenda

- National and state overview of MESA Partners
- Basic program goals and objectives
  -- minimum membership required
  -- "Incentive Scholarship Program"
- School district plans for MESA Partners for current school year
- Ways parents can be involved in MESA Partners
- Ways parents can help their children to do better in school
- Organize Concerned Parents, Inc.
  -- sign forms
  -- elect officers

Suggestion: Include the orientation for new parents as part of a career exploration/industry program.

2nd Semester: Parent Activity Date _____

Agenda

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

PARTNERS ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITY

Ensure that all PARTNERS members are scheduled to take college prep math, science, English for the coming year.

PARTNERS BASIC CURRICULUM

Freshman (9th)	Sophomore (10th)	Junior (11th)	Senior (12th)
English	English	English	English
Algebra I	Geometry I	Algebra III	Trigonometry
Albebra II	Geometry II	Algebra IV	Math Analysis
Biology	Chemistry	Physics	College Physics or Chemistry
*Social Studies	*	*	*
**Foreign Language	**	**	**
Electives	Electives	Electives	Electives Computer Math Calculus

Points may also be achieved for the courses outlined on the attached page.

* Social Studies includes such subjects as: History, Government, Geography, Civics, and Psychology.

** PARTNERS students should include at least two years of a foreign language during their high school years.

PARTNERS Advisors should meet with students individually to discuss their next year's class schedule.

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